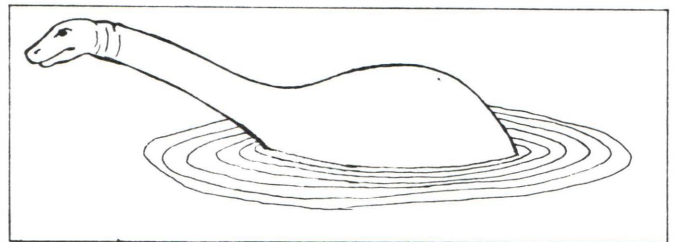


This is BILK number 5 / November 1985 / edited by Ulrich Magin / BILK appears bi-monthly / Subscription £3 for Europe and \$ 5 for the USA This issue I concentrate on the Brazilian mermaid, giving further historical information. And, again, pre-1930 reports of the Loch Ness monster - this is another track I will pursue in BILK. There are no news of seaserpents or giant cephalopods since the last issue, so I go on with marine forteana such as unusual lights.

BEHEMOTH:

● Africa: 51-year-old Herman Regusters, who saw a 10 metres long-necked dinosaurlike monster in Lake Tele, 600 km north of Brazzaville, Congo, in 1981, intended to go on a new expedition to search for the living fossil. When he saw the monster four years ago he was unable to film it because of the large distance and camera malfunction. Evidently he plans the new expedition to get some positive proof on film - and while he was still planning, Walt Disney's new film 'Baby', director Bill Norton, came into German cinemas. I saw parts of the film on TV and thought the monster looked very unconvincing...German papers thought the movie inspired Regusters, instead of vice versa. (Die Rheinpfalz, 27.III.85 and Sonntag Aktuell, 2.VI.85)



● Loch Ness: A Wellington bomber, which crashed into Loch Ness in World War II (on New Year's Eve 1940) was raised by its owner, the Loch Ness Wellington Association, which spent £50,000 for the salvage. It is planned to put the well-preserved plane on exhibition at a Weybridge, Surrey, flight museum. The raising was scheduled to begin on September 9, and was finished two weeks later on Saturday, 21st. The salvaged bomber is the only surviving of 11,000 which saw active service. (Daily Express, 19.VIII.85 and Rheinpfalz, 23.IX.85 and Daily Telegraph, 23.IX.85)

● Loch Ness: There are some more pre-1930 mentions, but mainly of kelpies. W.G. Steward: Popular Superstitions, 1823 (was reprinted 1970 by Wardlock Reprints), p.149 mentions the kelpie of Loch Ness. According to the Stuttgarter Zeitung, 19.VII.1978, p.3a, William Thackeray (1811-1863) mentions the monster of the loch and thinks the Scottish whiskey and mist is to blame. And I have notice of another Inverness Courier article of September 14, 1884, about the seaserpent, but I do not know what the report says, possibly a monster in the Moray Firth, possible one in Loch Ness. If anybody could check that out, and tell me more, I would be most thankful.

ISIS:

● The Brazilian mermaid again: as stated in last issue of BILK, the culprit for these reports seems to be the Amazonian delphin, Inia geoffrensis. These are very ancient animals, which still have hair at their mouth, and the fins show signs of five digits, so that they resemble a hand, and their head sits on a movable neck. This seems to produce the mermaid-like appearance. (R. Stenuit: Delphine, BLV, Munich 1970, p.51)

● In 1556 - 58 Jean de Lery, a French priest, visited Brasil. In Chapter

13 of his "Historia Navigationis in Brasiliam", 1586, he related a curious story: an Indian, who was fishing in the sea in a small boat saw a big fish which put its fin into his boat. Frightened the Indian cut off this fin and saw that it was a human hand. Then the head of the fish appeared, and it was a human head. Lery himself never saw such an animal, but he says it may be that all animals of the land have a counterpart in the sea, an old belief. The mermaid trying to get into a boat is a common feature in merfolk-sightings.

- The first mention of this extremely cruel breed of nymphs in the books of the Portuguese colonists can be found in the works of Fernão Cardim: Trato do da Terra e Gente do Brasil, 1585 and Gabriel Soares de Sousa: Tratado Descritivo do Brasil em 1587. The first was a Jesuite padre, the second a sugar producer. According to them, the merfolk only appear in Summer near freshwater. They look exactly like humans with deep eyes, the women with long hair. They make love with Indians and negroes and then kill them. They mutilate their victims, eating their eyes, noses, fingers, toes and genitals. They are different from the sharks. Their name is homens marinhos in Portuguese and Iquipiára or Upupiára in Tupi, the Indian language. (R. Lewinsohn: Geschichte der Tiere, Rowohlt, Hamburg 1952, p.170 and Herbert Wendt: Auf Nochs Spuren, Grote, Hamm 1956, p.253) It seems that the folktales haven't changed very much since the 16th century, and now people actually see these creatures)

- See also BILK 2 and 4

LEVIATHAN:

- Letter from T.D. Coppin, District Controller, Falmouth Coastguard, to Ulrich Magin, dated 9.IX.1985: "We do not keep records of sea-serpents at the Coastguard station and are of the opinion that Morgawr is a myth."

MARINE FORTEANA:

- Strange lights have been a mayor miracle since ancient times. A number was observed by the old seamen. Lery (see ISIS): Unter Menschenfressern, Erdmann, Basel 1977, p.151: "5. May 1558 - On May 5 we saw a giant fire-flash at sundown flashing and flying through the air. Our sails reflected this light so much that we thought the ship was burning. The apparition disappeared immediately without doing any harm. I can't say where it came from, as we were at the height of Newfoundland, where they fish for cod, in a generally cold area."

- Hans Staden, a German who visited Brasil in the 16th century, saw a more common type of light (Brasilien, Erdmann, Tübingen 1982, p.72): At the end of 1547, or early 1548, he saw, on route to Brasil "one night many blue lights on the ship, the like I had never seen before. When the waves hit the ship they went out. The Portuguese say these lights are a sign of good weather, and are send by God. We thanked with a prayer. Then they went out again. These lights are called Saint Elmo's Fire, or Corpus Sanctum."

CORRECTIONS:

There were a couple of mistakes and omissions in recent issues of BILK, which I note here: BILK 3: The source for the shark attack was the Rheinpfalz, 5.III.85. BILK 4: In the Lake Hanas report, please note that 3 ft = 1 metre. Credit for the octopus report off Cyprus is due to Michel Raynal, and the Wye River sighting of Chessie happened on June 26, 1985.

END

This was all for this time, my adress is still Ulrich Magin / Stuhlbruderhofstraße 4 / 6704 Mutterstadt / WEST GERMANY / Please send in new reports or letters with your opinion. I'd also like to get news about the Inverness Courier article mentioned above. And, after what happened in New Zealand, don't forget to support your local group of Greenpeace.

Next BILK will appear in January 1986. Have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.